



4.2.4 Gila County

Geography

Gila County covers 4,752 square miles and is located in the central to eastern portion of the State. The County is mapped into three ecoregions, Arizona Mountain Forests, Sonoran Desert and Chihuahuan Desert. The Forest elevations range from 4,000 to 13,000 feet, resulting in comparatively cool summers and cold winters. The Desert elevations vary from sea level to 3,000 feet with hot and dry summers and mild winters.

Population

In 2005, the County's population was 54,445. The population grew 6.1% between 2000 and 2005, which was less than half of the State's overall growth of 17.8% for the same period. The table below illustrates the population figures for the major cities and communities in the county. Payson, with a 2005 population of 15,430, is the County's most populous community. This is a very rural region of Arizona, and encompasses only a handful of incorporated towns including Globe, Hayden, and Miami. The small population growth that is expected to occur through the year 2030 is projected to develop primarily in and around Payson.

Gila County Population, 1990-2040							
Jurisdiction	1990	2000	2005	2010	2020	2030	2040
Gila County	40,216	51,335	54,445	57,766	64,396	69,879	74,195
Globe	6,062	7,486	7,495	8,107	8,661	9,167	9,508
Hayden	909	892	860	912	913	914	915
Miami	2,018	1,936	1,955	2,094	2,127	2,157	2,177
Payson	8,377	13,620	15,430	17,427	21,297	24,833	27,214
San Carlos Apache Reservation	7,294	9,385	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Star Valley	N/A	N/A	2,265	3,182	4,518	5,854	7,190
Tonto Apache Reservation	102	132	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Winkelman	676	443	450	422	425	428	429
Note: Figures for 1990, 2000, 2005 from Arizona Dept. of Commerce. Figures for 2010-2040 from AZ DES (projections date from 1997).							
Source: Arizona Department of Commerce, May 2003; Arizona Department of Economic Security, February 1997.							

Economy & Labor Force

The County's major industries include Services, Construction, Wholesale Trade and Mining. The civilian labor force of the County in 2005 was 20,511, with an unemployment rate of 6.2%, substantially higher than the State's 2005 rate of 4.6%.

Historic Hazard Events

During the development of the original State of Arizona All-Hazard Mitigation Plan, a list of historic hazard events was compiled. Most counties researched local records and governmental databases to update and add records of recent hazards to the state compiled list for use in their plans. Additional hazard records were researched using the same criteria, with the exception that all damages greater than \$1 were included. Therefore, due to the variety of data sources and criteria, it should be kept in mind that the numbers reported reflect the availability of such data from those sources and the numbers are expected to under-predict the losses actually sustained over the past 30 to 40 years. A more thorough search for historic data in future planning efforts is mentioned in the county plans and encouraged by ADEM.

It is our hope that this data coupled with other risk assessment information will prove to be instrumental in assisting the County and State in future planning and mitigation efforts. We believe this can happen by this data accurately indicating which hazards we are most susceptible to; how damaging these hazards can be to us; and the damage costs or costs avoided through future mitigation projects.



Historic Record of Disaster Events in Gila County								
Event Type	Statewide or Multiple County, Incl Gila				Substantially Gila			
	Total	Fatalities	Injuries	Loss \$	Total	Fatalities	Injuries	Loss \$
Drought	69	0	0	300,244,000	1	0	0	42,000
Dust/Sand Storms	3	1	14	0	1	0	0	0
Earthquake	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
Flooding/Flash Flooding	11	19	115	1,347,778,000	52	9	1	3,804,000
Hazardous Materials Incidents	3	0	0	493,000	11	1	10	713,000
Thunderstorms/High Winds	6	0	0	10,050,000	80	7	9	262,000
Tornadoes/Dust Devils	0	0	0	0	5	0	9	25,000
Tropical Storms / Hurricane	9	37	975	767,428,000	0	0	0	0
Wildfire	22	0	0	39,801,000	23	6	0	5,264,000
Winter Storms	24	13	8	2,517,000	18	0	0	46,000
Note: "Statewide or Multiple County, Incl Gila" events met the 1 or more of the following criteria: at least 1 injury and/or fatality or Historical Significance. All had at least \$50,000 in reported Losses. "Substantially Gila" events met 1 or more of the following criteria: at least 1 reported injury and/or fatality or Historical Significance. No minimum dollar amount for Losses was used. All information is derived from the best data available at the time.								
Source: Gila County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan, FEMA Approved November 2005.								

Vulnerability

The County includes a comparatively small number and modest proportion of population that is potentially vulnerable to hazards. The County has a relatively aged resident base, with only 24.3% of its citizens 18 years of age and under and 17.1% over the age of 65. These numbers compare with statewide averages of 26.6% and 12.8%, respectively.

Gila County Populations Potentially Vulnerable to Hazards, 2005				
Jurisdiction	Population			
	Total	Under 18 yrs	65+ years	Below Poverty Level
Arizona	6,044,985	1,607,966	773,758	840,253
Gila County	54,445	13,230	11,379	9,310
As a % of County	100%	24.3%	20.9%	17.1%
As a % of State	.9%	.8%	1.5%	1.1%
Source: Estimates based on US Census Bureau data, 2007. Poverty Level as defined by US Census Bureau.				

Gila County Dwelling Units Potentially Vulnerable to Hazards, 2005		
Jurisdiction	Housing Units	
	Total	Built Before 1970
Arizona	2,544,806	490,710
Gila County	29,661	8,043
Source: Estimates based on US Census Bureau. Data, 2007.		

Hazards & Mitigation Strategy

Using the results of the County's vulnerability and capability analysis and the goals and objectives, a list of actions/projects was formulated. The actions/projects were then evaluated and ranked using the STAPLEE procedure. Below are the top ranking identified hazards and their actions/projects as indicated in the County's Hazard Mitigation Plan approved by FEMA on September 8, 2006:

Flooding/Flash Flooding

Action 1: Construct bridge across Tonto Creek at Tonto Basin to provide all weather access to residents and emergency personnel in the community.

Action 2: Reconstruct bridge on hospital access road across Russell Gulch to provide all weather access to residents and emergency personnel in the community.



Thunderstorm/High Winds

Action 1: Continue to enforce building codes to mitigate against high wind damage to existing and future buildings and infrastructure.

Wildfires

Action 1: Continue progress on the Rim Country CWPP and foster development of southern Gila County CWPP.

Action 2: Partner with multiple agencies and Regional Payson Area Project to educate the public on wildfire fuel reduction on private property within the County. Use DOJ inmate workforce to perform wildfire fuel reduction projects within the County to protect existing and future buildings and infrastructure.

Mitigation Strategy Progress

Through development of this Plan, the need to significantly refine the goals/objectives and actions/projects in our original Plan was evident. We believe this need is a result of the determination to focus the Plan more on natural caused hazards as other hazards are covered in their appropriate plans (i.e. health, terrorism, etc.). There is also much to be said about the increased amount of information available regarding hazard mitigation planning.

To encourage our jurisdictions to re-evaluate their Plan's Mitigation Strategy as well, each County was asked to indicate their action/project progress since the development of their Plan.

No information was provided by County.

Other Planning Mechanisms

During their planning process, the County staff reviewed and evaluated their resources and capabilities in the areas of Existing Plans, Policies and Ordinances; Technical Staff/Resources and Financial Resources. Although all resources are important to a community's ability to mitigate the effects of natural and human-caused hazards, we elected to ask the County to complete a survey indicating their legal and regulatory resources to be included in the Plan.

No information was provided by County and the related data in their approved mitigation plan was inconclusive.



State of Arizona
Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan

Map 6 Major Features of Gila County